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Premier and ministers meet with aboriginal leaders (04/03/19)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - Premier Bernard Lord wants to meet annually with aboriginal chiefs. That proposal came out of a meeting today between the premier, Justice Minister Brad Green, who is also Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Natural Resources Minister Keith Ashfield and Mi'kmaq and Maliseet chiefs. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues of mutual interest and as part of ongoing efforts to build government's relationship with First Nations.

"It is my sincere hope that we can develop an open and constructive relationship so that we can work in partnership on many of the challenges that we are facing," Lord said. "The relationship between the provincial government and the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples is important to the future of the province and all who live here."

During their meeting, the premier and ministers reaffirmed the government's commitment to exploratory talks on aboriginal and treaty rights, and discussed with the chiefs how to work together to ensure the viability and sustainability of New Brunswick forests. The ministers acknowledged the importance of consulting with First Nations communities on provincial matters that may affect aboriginal and treaty rights, and they committed to having appropriate consultations.

The premier and ministers also raised with the chiefs the goal of improving educational outcomes for aboriginal students, and ways of maximizing job opportunities for First Nations communities. Ministers also talked about the need to ensure the electoral system reflects New Brunswick's diversity and said that the Commission on Legislative Democracy is interested in obtaining their views.

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